STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION AND THE ROLE OF NONLETHAL WEAPONS

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD B. McNABB
United States Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 1999



U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 4

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

U.S. Military Intervention and the Role of Nonlethal Weapons

by

Lt Col Richard B. McNabb USAF

Colonel Dick Mullery Project Advisor

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

U.S. Army War College CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lt Col Richard B. McNabb

TITLE: U.S. Military Intervention and the Role of Nonlethal

Weapons

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 7 April 1998 PAGES: 35 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the world has experienced increasing numbers of conflicts and the ever-present problems with natural crises. The U.S. finds itself at a crossroads with no peer military competitor on the horizon. The likelihood of U.S. military involvement in interventions abroad is likely. The U.S. military must take the initiative and develop the policies, equipment and training to effectively execute this mission. Nonlethal weapons provide an opportunity to enhance the military's capability to further U.S. national interests. Public opinion in this information revolution age can significantly impact our government's position on foreign affairs. Nonlethal weapons have both their advantages and risks and these need to be thoroughly analyzed. America should take the lead in the development and application of nonlethal weapons to better apply its military element of national power.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACTiii
PREFACE vii
INTRODUCTION 1
POLITICO-MILITARY ENVIRONMENT 2
FORCE PROTECTION 3
WILL OF THE PEOPLE 5
INTERVENTION 7
LIKELIHOOD OF U.S. INTERVENTION 8
COSTS AND BENEFITS OF INTERVENTION 8
DECIDING ON INTERVENTION 10
ARGUMENTS FOR/AGAINST INTERVENTION
NONLETHALS
WHERE NONLETHALS STAND TODAY
NONLETHAL POLICY
SHORTFALLS
ADVANTAGES OF NONLETHAL WEAPONS
RISKS OF USING NONLETHAL WEAPONS
RECOMMENDATIONS
CONCLUSION
ENDNOTES
BIBLIOGRAPHY

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

PREFACE

To Phoophee.

INTRODUCTION

Phenomenal changes in our world today provide an unprecedented opportunity for the United States to influence world events in support of its national interests, provided it is postured to take advantage of this environment. The fall of the Soviet Union decreases the likelihood of a major war, both nuclear and conventional. This allows the United States a chance to review its military's roles, design, and missions without the immediate threat of a potential worldwide confrontation between East and West.

A technological explosion has accelerated dramatic advancements in numerous fields. A new arena for the development of weapons systems with unconventional capabilities and applications has emerged. Mechanical, biological, chemical and psychological breakthroughs have opened portals for significant advancements in these fields. Additionally, an information explosion has resulted in near real time television coverage of world events. This, combined with the proliferation of the Internet, has placed American actions abroad, especially military actions, under a public microscope. Scenes of destruction and suffering are beamed into the homes of every American. The United States is pressured, both externally and internally, to function as the world's police force and 911 agency to control these conflicts and natural disasters to lessen or eliminate the suffering of innocents.

In this environment, nonlethal weapons can be a tremendous asset to the United States. The development, incorporation and application of nonlethal weapons provide a tremendous opportunity to effectively exercise U.S. military power in its national interest.

This paper will review the current politico-military environment, the renewed emphasis on force protection, U.S. military intervention abroad, and the Department of Defense's policy on non-lethal weapons. It will then address the advantages and risks associated with nonlethal weapons, the need for such weapons to effectively prosecute U.S. foreign policy, and the recommended actions to incorporate them in the future U.S arsenal of national power.

POLITICO-MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

Since the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union, the United Stated finds itself as the only military and economic superpower in a multipolar world. The pressure cooker of regional, ethnic and religious conflicts, existing in some cases for centuries and until recently subdued by the lid of the Soviet military, have inevitably exploded. This violence, combined with ever-present intranational conflicts, such as those on the African continent, have the world looking to the United States for assistance and leadership.

The likelihood of American involvement in a conventional conflict diminished significantly after the drubbing administered to Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf War. However, conflicts below the level of war, instigated by those unconcerned with world public opinion or willing to pay the economic and political costs of conflict, are becoming more commonplace. Unable to match the U.S. with conventional forces or weaponry, some international actors will choose the asymmetric approach to confrontation. Furthermore, being the only superpower makes Americans a highly visible target for terrorist forces looking to advertise their causes. This places the U.S. in the unenviable position of having to defend its forces against these verydifficult-to-defend-against actions.

FORCE PROTECTION

The military understands the need and inherent right of self-protection from any and all threats. In <u>Doctrine for Joint Operations</u>, Joint Force Commanders (JFC) are advised that during operations other than war, security deals with force protection against any person or group hostile to our interests, including terrorists. The JFC must be constantly ready to counter harmful threats or activities that could jeopardize mission accomplishment. However, immediately following this warning on self-protection, this publication restrains the JFC by requiring the prudent application of appropriate military force.

In operations other than war, Rules of Engagement (ROE) will often be restrictive, detailed, and sensitive to political concerns. There may be restraints on weaponry, tactics, and the level of violence. Excessive force could adversely affect efforts to gain or maintain legitimacy and hamper the attainment of both military and political goals. The reasons for restraint are critical and must be understood by all, for a single act could cause critical political consequences.³

This is an appropriate and valid warning. A lone U.S. sentry assaulted by a mob during a humanitarian operation may feel justified in feeling his life threatened. However, if he fires into the crowd and ends up killing unarmed women or children, then the subsequent television coverage will have a difficult time describing the potential life threatening part of the incident, but an easy time displaying the aftermath of dead women and children during a humanitarian operation. Public outcry could significantly influence our political leaders' decision process and affect their support for the operation.

Force protection is paramount though extremely difficult when a handful of perpetrators can be hidden amongst an innocent populace, especially in the world's growing urban areas. The National Defense Policy Report provides the following insights and recommendations.

Although we might prefer to avoid urban situations, mission requirements in peace and war may not allow this preference. We need to develop intelligence systems and military capabilities that enable the effective control (or eviction) of regular enemy forces from urban terrain. Furthermore, we must do so without putting at risk friendly forces or noncombatants, while being careful not to destroy critical infrastructures that will be essential to post-hostility recovery.⁴

Attacks on deployed American military forces in Beirut, Saudi Arabia, and Somalia have highlighted the issue and place it at the top of our military leaders' concerns. Nonlethal weapons may provide part of the solution to this difficult problem.

WILL OF THE PEOPLE

Clausewitz referred to a trilogy involving the government, the military and the people and that combination and interaction of these each were critical to successful military operations.

This paper will focus primarily on the people portion of this trilogy. In his book Why is Strategy Difficult?, David Jablonsky states that a change in the strategic paradigm occurred after the Civil War, "the growing importance of the national will of the people in achieving political as well as military objectives." He expanded by saying "if the national will was weakened or lacking, the most trifling military defeat at the tactical or operational level could be decisive."

In the decades following World War II, the American public has had an increased interest in national security affairs. Paralleling this trend, technological advancements in mass communication produced a strategically more aware electorate, increasingly concerned and active in the U.S. national policy process. Gone are the days when foreign policy decisions are made in the Oval Office without influence from the congress or the American public.

Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger developed a set of criteria known as the Weinberger Doctrine for decision-makers contemplating American military intervention. His doctrine states that: "Before the United States commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress." If we do not have that support, or subsequently lose that support because of political, military or social developments, then the foreign intervention policy is doomed to failure. The military must realize the impact this support has on intervention operations and develop the equipment and training necessary to preclude our national policies being driven by military failures and subsequent loss of public support.

Potential adversaries have learned that it is not necessary to fight to win wars or even battles against democracies, but only to fight not to lose. They need only convince the American public that the costs of continued intervention, quantified in terms of American casualties, is too high. Excellent examples of this can be found in both Vietnam and Somalia. The 1968 TET Offensive was an operational victory but strategic defeat for the U.S. In Somalia, U.S. forces succeeded in accomplishing the mission to capture leaders of Aideed's faction and inflicted thousands of casualties while only suffering 18 killed. However, this tactical victory led to the strategic defeat and withdrawal of U.S. forces because of its affect on American public opinion.

INTERVENTION

A critical question that must be answered is, is there a need for U.S. foreign intervention? After the resounding success of the U.S. led coalition in the Gulf War, many thought American intervention had become a mainstay in world affairs. However, the first two years of the Clinton administration dampened that philosophy somewhat.

The Clinton foreign policy team entered office in 1993 full of enthusiasm for the United Nations as an instrument of "assertive multilateralism" -in short, of intervention. By the spring of 1994, however, failure of the United Nations' intervention in Somalia, continuing confusion over Bosnia, and American reluctance to send military forces to Haiti had combined to feed growing public and congressional doubt about both the wisdom of U.S. intervention and our ability to intervene successfully. This widespread sentiment made it easy to conclude that intervention had become a discredited relic of a now bygone era. 10

It is unrealistic to believe that these successes or failures mean that the debate over American intervention is settled. The new and constantly changing world environment requires a fresh look at the policies, capabilities and consequences of intervention. 11

Intervention encompasses the entire spectrum of coercion; political, economic, military and information. We are constantly intervening in world affairs through one or a combination of these techniques. With America's global political, economic and

informational interrelationships and interests, a policy of total nonintervention is totally unreasonable.

LIKELIHOOD OF U.S. INTERVENTION

What is the likelihood of U.S. foreign intervention? There are several factors that point toward an increase in U.S. interventions abroad. First, the end of the Cold War has lifted the constraint of having all U.S. actions overshadowed by a potential superpower confrontation. Second, there is an increased emphasis on economic considerations in foreign policy (e.g. NAFTA, GATT, economic relations with Japan and China, etc.). A cornerstone requirement for economic prosperity is global stability in this increasingly interdependent global marketplace. Third, there is increased foreign policy emphasis on supporting democracies, humanitarian operations and human rights. And finally, the post-Cold War world has become more dangerous and disorderly with the eruption of conflicts previously mentioned. Together, these factors suggest that interventions will increase in future U.S. foreign policy. 12

COSTS AND BENEFITS OF INTERVENTION

Intervention is not intrinsically good or bad, it depends on its application to a particular situation. Intervention should have a clear purpose to either support American interests or uphold American values. The decision on whether or not to intervene should be based on this purpose and its potential costs

and benefits. Hopefully, the benefits outweigh the costs in situations we decide to intervene. 13

Though this process may sound simple, it is far from it.

Determining practical, logical, and quantifiable costs and benefits is a daunting task that varies with each individual's beliefs and opinions. Determining an exact relationship is not as important as the process of discussing and understanding the variables involved. If decision makers access and incorporate the knowledge of the regional experts and all the players (military, State Department, NGOs, PVOs, etc.) involved in a potential intervention, then an informed decision should have a chance of being reached.

Since the U.S. is no longer embroiled in a global struggle for national survival, the benefits of intervention have become clouded, more difficult to envision or define. However, the costs associated with failed interventions have become more significant. Besides the obvious financial costs and costs in lives, there are political costs.

Even minor problems during overt interventions, especially military intervention, may have great political impact in the age of global televised news, when vivid images can bring about rapid changes in the national mood. The pictures of the October 1993 desecration of dead Americans in Somalia, for example, led directly to the American decision to withdraw its forces from the United Nations effort in the ravaged nation.¹⁴

Less definable costs might include a national revulsion for foreign affairs, a loss of international credibility for

intervening and then backing down, or even lost opportunities to intervene in other situations because of our limited available resources. 15

This is not meant to paint a bleak picture for intervention, only to emphasize the critical thought that must proceed such decisions.

DECIDING ON INTERVENTION

When determining if intervention is appropriate, decisionmakers must weigh the costs and benefits along with the U.S.
interests or values that are at stake. Some of these decisions
will be readily apparent. If no U.S. interests or values are
involved, there should be no intervention, no matter how low the
cost. If the U.S. interest is so important that the cost of
inaction is so severe, then intervention is required.

Unfortunately, the preponderance of intervention options fall
into the category of a gray area, where there are some costs and
some benefits.

When a decision to intervene is made, decision-makers may still influence the cost-benefit equation by determining the method of intervention with the lowest cost in terms of dollars, lives and political capital. Should we intervene economically, politically, diplomatically or militarily and to what level? This paper addresses only the military side of intervention, and here is where nonlethal weapons can figure significantly. Though technology offers a potential dollar cost savings by using

nonlethal vice conventional weapons, the more significant cost reduction comes from potential lives saved, especially those of innocents, and the subsequent reduction in political costs.

Employing the ends, ways, and means paradigm may help to understand the role of non-lethal weapons. The ends the U.S. seeks are world stability and the reduction of unnecessary loss of life. The means to achieve these ends lie in our instruments of national power, in this case specifically political and military. One way to achieve these goals using these elements is through the effective use of non-lethal weapons.

ARGUMENTS FOR/AGAINST INTERVENTION

The decision to employ American forces around the world in a myriad of peacekeeping and humanitarian missions is a hot button for political commentary. Proponents of increasing U.S. worldwide involvement argue that the military has no other function after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, its only significant conventional threat. The Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, commenting during a televised interview on the use of U.S. military forces in peace operations, questioned the worth of having a military if you can't use it. This current mindset, coupled with an American history of interventions in this century (Dominican Republic, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Somalia, Haiti, Kosovo?, etc.), make it likely that the U.S. military will continue to be used in such operations.

The Pentagon argues it is not trained nor manned to perform this non-primary mission. Soldiers do not make good policemen. They are not trained in the social, psychological, cultural or political idiosyncrasies required for success in such operations. Stagnating in a long, drawn-out peacekeeping operation merely results in the atrophy of primary war fighting skills.

Who is right, and who is wrong? Both are right and both are wrong. There are no other forces to use in peace or humanitarian operations our government considers in our national interests to participate. However, our political leadership cannot frivolously deploy military forces into so-called peaceful operations without a careful consideration of the risks involved. We have painfully learned that incursion without careful analysis and definition of the political benefits and potential costs can prove disastrous.

The military is right that its forces are ill prepared to conduct these types of operations. Unfortunately, there is no one to blame but the military for its training state of affairs. Military leaders must face the reality of the end of the Cold War and the unlikely emergence of a conventional competitor, at least in the near term. The military cannot continue to argue that peacekeeping is not a valid military mission and that it degrades its war fighting skills. If the duly elected leadership of the United States determine it is in this nations best interest to employ its military forces in foreign interventions, then it is

the responsibility of the military to accomplish that mission to the best of its ability. If that degrades from its conventional warfighting skills, then it is also the military's responsibility to inform the civilian leadership of such. Since the United States has no internationally deployable police force, it has and will most likely continue to rely on its military forces to perform this difficult role. Hot spots like Bosnia, Haiti, and Kosovo, and humanitarian efforts like Somalia and Rwanda hint of likely scenarios with future U.S. military involvement.

Current military training and equipment do not enhance successful mission accomplishment for our deployed armed forces in these types of missions. Military forces are trained and equipped to conduct operations where there is a visible opponent, battle lines and clear rules of engagement. Peacekeeping operations, such as Somalia and Bosnia, do not provide our forces with a clear distinction of perpetrators and non-combatants. Furthermore, our current weapons do not allow commanders a range of options for force magnitude in these ambiguous conflicts other-than-war. Military commanders' options are limited to doing nothing in potential crisis situations, or resorting to the use of lethal force. General John J. Sheehan, U.S.M.C., Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Command, questions, "Why do we continue to put our young men and women in situations where they must decide between using deadly force or risk possible injury or death?" The military must

take the initiative to revise its philosophy, training, and equipment to continue to be viable and prepared for these operations in current and future environments.

Excluding diplomacy and moral suasion, the traditional tools of intervention are military force and economic leverage. If we are to increase our options, we must adapt our military forces to the changed circumstances of the post-cold war world, augment traditional lethal military force with new, nonlethal tools, improve the effectiveness of economic sanctions, or find entirely new tools of intervention and coercion.¹⁹

NONLETHALS

WHERE NONLETHALS STAND TODAY

Many military leaders still plan on fighting World War III with the Soviet Union. They would just as soon never deal with any operations other than war and are unwilling to support expenditures in terms of time, training, or dollars to enhance the U.S ability to participate in these types of conflicts. They feel any effort spent in this area would serve only to further degrade this country's already dwindling warfighting capability.

Fortunately, several realists and visionaries attempted to drag the remainder of the defense establishment into the realities of our post-cold war environment. In March 1991, then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney established a Non-Lethal Warfare Study Group. This group supported a wide range of policies and programs designed to enhance the development and fielding of nonlethal weapons. However, support in the DOD was scarce and

the recommendations moved to the back burner during the change of administrations. Later, U.S. military involvement in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and the disaster at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas spurred renewed interest and advocacy among military commanders who realized the value of force options in these operations—other—than—war.

NONLETHAL POLICY

To establish a policy foundation, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict produced Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.3, Policy for Non-lethal Weapons in 1996. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology designated the Commandant of the Marine Corps as executive agent for the program. A January 1997 memorandum of agreement among the services established a Joint Non-lethal Weapons Directorate that in 1998 developed a Joint Concept for Non-lethal Weapons. The chairman of the Acquisition and Technology Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee supported nonlethal weapons as "offering U. S. and NATO forces the capability to manage, contain, and diffuse certain volatile and low-intensity situations."

Department of Defense Directive 3000.3, Policy for Non-Lethal Weapons, established DOD policies and assigned responsibilities for the development and employment of non-lethal weapons. It defines non-lethal weapons as:

Weapons that are explicitly designed and primarily employed so as to incapacitate personnel or materiel, while minimizing fatalities, permanent injury to personnel, and undesired damage to property and the environment. Unlike conventional lethal weapons that destroy their targets principally through blast, penetration and fragmentation, non-lethal weapons employ means other than gross physical destruction to prevent the target from functioning. Non-lethal weapons are intended to have one, or both, of the following characteristics: a. they have relatively reversible effects on personnel or materiel, b. they affect objects differently within their area of influence.²⁴

One fundamental point in defining nonlethal weapons is they are intended not to kill or physically destroy the enemy, but to inhibit the enemy's ability or will to fight.²⁵

There are two basic categories of nonlethal weapons: antimateriel and anti-personnel. Employing advancements in modern chemical technologies, military technicians have significantly enhanced the development of anti-materiel nonlethal weapons. Some examples of these weapons are "combustion interferents" that can disable ground vehicles or aircraft without necessarily harming the occupants. Chemical metal-embrittlement agents and corrosive chemical compounds can destroy modern vehicles and equipment without the explosive and potentially deadly force of conventional weapons. There are substances so slippery as to make roads impassable or super glues strong enough to make vehicles stick to the ground.

Anti-personnel nonlethal weapons have attracted the most attention and criticism. Since these weapons are directed against humans, visions of government mind control a la

Aldus Huxley's <u>Brave New World</u> give critics cause for skepticism. On the less mystical side, anti-personnel weapons range from physical incapacitants in the form of sticky foams to physiological incapacitants in the form of low frequency microwaves that make the target nauseous. It is important to bring these capabilities to the national level forum to decide the appropriate direction to take.

DODD 3000.3 further addresses the objectives of this policy and provides guidance for the use of nonlethal weapons. The policy states that:

- 1. Non-lethal weapons, doctrine, and concepts of operation will serve to reinforce deterrence while expanding the range of options available to commanders.
- 2. Non-lethal weapons should enhance the military's ability to accomplish the following objectives:
 - a. Discourage, delay, or prevent hostile actions.
 - b. Limit escalation.
 - c. Take military action in situations where the use of lethal force is not the preferred option.
 - d. Better protect our forces.
 - e. Temporarily disable equipment, facilities, and personnel.
- 3. Non-lethal weapons should be designed to decrease the cost of post-conflict reconstruction.
- 4. The availability of non-lethal weapons shall not limit a commander's inherent authority and obligation to use all means available and to take all appropriate action in self-defense.
- 5. Neither the presence nor the potential effect of non-lethal weapons shall constitute an obligation for their employment or a higher standard for employment .of force than provided for by applicable law. In all cases, the United States retains the option for immediate use of lethal weapons, when appropriate, consistent with international law.
- 6. Non-lethal weapons shall not be required to have a zero probability of producing fatalities or permanent injuries. However, while complete avoidance of these effects is not guaranteed or expected, when properly employed, non-lethal weapons should significantly reduce them as compared with physically destroying the same target.

7. Non-lethal weapons may be used in conjunction with lethal weapon systems to enhance the latter's effectiveness and efficiency in military operations. This will apply across the range of military operations to include those situations where overwhelming force is employed.²⁸

SHORTFALLS

The most significant shortfalls lie not in the policy itself, but in the lack of support it receives both in implementation and overarching policy guidance from the rest of the government outside of the Defense Department. Lacking any guidance or vision from the Executive Branch, the Department of Defense developed this policy to best define the rules of engagement for and application of non-lethal weapons. It emphasizes the potential downfalls of inappropriate restrictions or expectations for nonlethals.

However, even within the defense establishment, the Services have failed to make the development and incorporation of nonlethal weapons into their operations a priority. Funding remains restricted to concept demonstrations and experimentation. Despite a push from the leadership of the Marine Corps, who feel they are the most likely users and benefactors of non-lethal technologies, the other Services have failed to take up the banner to invest appropriately or revise policy, doctrine, or training to incorporate nonlethal weapons. The reasons for this could be plentiful. Embracing this technology and capability would be tantamount to admitting that peace operations were a credible mission for U.S. military forces in the future.

Nonlethal weapons could be a Pandora's Box for proliferation of such weapons that we ourselves have no defense against.

Nonlethal weapons raise many difficult ethical, legal and moral questions that many would rather not address. The time and monies spent on nonlethal weapons and training could be better spent on the conventional side of military operations.

ADVANTAGES OF NONLETHAL WEAPONS

Numerous advantages from the use of nonlethal weapons exist. A significant, positive attribute of nonlethal weaponry is its variable utility. As an alternative and humane way of handling disturbances such as crowd control, riots, hostage situations and the apprehension of violent criminals, it gives military commanders a toolkit of force options. To a very limited extent, U.S. forces during the Gulf War, in Somalia, in the occupation of Haiti and in the former Yugoslavia successfully deployed nonlethal weapons. In Somalia, the military commander discovered the capabilities of nonlethal weapons unfortunately not through military channels but through a Reservist who used them in his civilian job as a police officer in Los Angeles. Regarded as "life preserving" and, in many aspects, environmentally friendly, nonlethal weapons, with their lower costs, also lend the appearance of fiscal responsibility.²⁹

Since the end of World War II, nations have been able to avoid the much-dreaded nuclear holocaust. However, tremendous efforts have been made to enhance the lethality of conventional

weapons. Critics, spurred on by the advent of new technologies and constant media surveillance, demand the development of nonlethal weapons for use in conflict scenarios.³⁰

These advantages affect the cost-benefit ratio directly and can possibly eliminate a catastrophic political failure by both protecting Americans and minimizing innocent loss of life. They also make it likely there will be a continued interest in and the increased use of nonlethal weapons as demands expand for humane intervention in future conflicts. Nonlethal means will assist the United States and various regional security organizations supporting peace operations.³¹

RISKS OF USING NONLETHAL WEAPONS

Incorporating the reduced costs afforded intervention through the use of nonlethal weapons does not come without risk. "The availability of low-cost, low-risk options borne of new techniques and new technologies may tempt us to make the mistake of intervening in unwarranted cases, intervening because we can, rather than because we should."³²

Another risk lies in the potential misperception of what nonlethal weapons can and cannot promise. The term "nonlethal" implies there are absolutely no fatalities. This is an unrealistic goal and would be more accurately described as "less than lethal" or "sublethal". This potential lethal aspect of nonlethal weapons is a critical point for our information campaign to convince the target audience of our intent for the

use of these weapons. The target audience could be potential adversaries, non-combatants, the American public, world opinion, or a combination of all of these.

Some concern exists in the international community on controlling development and research on nonlethal weaponry.

Blinding lasers were prohibited in a 1995 United Nations conference. If the United States Senate ratifies the Chemical Weapons Convention, there will be new restrictions on some nonlethal categories such as tear gas and other crowd dispersal agents. However, there have been no further international treaties banning the development or employment of nonlethal weapons. America must develop a vision, a plan, and a policy for nonlethal weapons to best influence and take the lead in this international environment to ensure U.S. interests are advocated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic implications of the lack of a coherent, well-thought-out policy are significant. Erratic or inconsistent rules of engagement can serve to exacerbate a problem as opposed to the intended goal of calming a situation. The U.S. must be culturally aware of the impact nonlethal weapons may have on the local population. Culturally adverse effects may turn an otherwise neutral populace into an antagonistic one. The U.S. needs to advertise to foreign nations and non-state actors its intent both to use nonlethal weapons and its purpose in reducing

death or injuries to innocents. It must also emphasize its inherent right to use lethal force when necessary lest potential adversaries see nonlethals as a lack of U.S. commitment or resolve. The U.S. needs to warn potential foreign adversaries through its international dialogues abroad and in the United Nations. In the eyes of the world and the American public, the appropriate use of non-lethal weapons can serve as a significant enhancement to perception of the U.S. as a world leader dedicated to stability and the reduction of innocent loss of life.

Within the Department of Defense, who will be responsible for the development of training and doctrine on how to implement and integrate this new technology into overall military strategy.35 Will all forces be trained in the use of nonlethal weapons, or only those limited to these operations other than war? Do these nonlethal weapons have the potential of enhancing the effects of conventional lethal weapons and if so, should they be incorporated in our wartime arsenal? How do we defend against the use of nonlethal weapons against our own forces? How rapidly should our forces be able to transition from nonlethal to lethal weapons? These are all questions that need answers. Since the military will be the ones facing the challenges of peace operations, it should take the lead in the discussions and direction of nonlethal weapons. The Services and all agencies involved in these operations should sit down and discuss the issue to come up with an intelligent, well-thought-through

policy. If the military is unwilling to take the lead initiative, it may be incumbent on the Executive Branch or the Congress. These weapons are becoming available. The United States stands in the optimum position to lead the world in their appropriate development and application. If we chose to abdicate that responsibility, other nations or forces will soon take up the banner and we may actually find ourselves on the receiving end of their effects.

CONCLUSION

Currently the world's only economic and military superpower,
America stands on the threshold of an opportunity that should not
be squandered through inaction or dogmatic support of tradition.
The U.S. stands at a crossroad in history. As possibly the most
dominant power on earth since the Romans, we have an opportunity
to lead the world through a potential unprecedented period of
peace. However, we must be prepared politically and militarily
to effectively orchestrate world peace and not be hog-tied by our
own outdated concepts and bureaucratic inertia.

ENDNOTES

- Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr. and Steven Metz, <u>Non-Lethality and American Land Power: Strategic Context and Operational Concepts</u>, (U.S. Army War College, 1998), 6.
- ² Joint Pub 3-0, <u>Doctrine for Joint Operations</u>, 1 Feb 1995, V-2.
 - ³ Ibid., V-3.
- ⁴ National Defense Panel. <u>Transforming Defense</u>; National <u>Security in the 21st Century</u>. Arlington, VA. Report of the National Defense Panel, December 1997, 37.
- ⁵ David Jablonsky, <u>Why is Strategy Difficult?</u>, Strategic Studies Institute, U. S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA., July 1995, 15.
 - ⁶ Ibid., 25
 - ⁷ Ibid., 46.
 - ⁸ Ibid., 49.
 - ⁹ Ibid., 47.
- ¹⁰ Arnold Kanter and Linton F. Brooks, <u>U.S. Intervention</u> <u>Policy for the Post-Cold War World</u>, (W.W. Norton & Co., 1994),14.
 - ¹¹ Ibid., 15.
 - ¹² Ibid., 16-17.
 - ¹³ Ibid., 15.
 - ¹⁴ Ibid., 17.
 - 15 Ibid.
 - ¹⁶ Ibid., 18.
 - 17 Ibid.
- General John J. Sheehan, Remarks during Non-Lethal Conference II, 7 Mar 96, Wash DC. Available from http://www.hqmc.usmc.mil/nlw/nlw.n.../766cd61315e6998f85256522004 f82a7? Accessed 4 October 1998.

- 19 Kanter and Brooks, 24.
- 20 Lovelace and Metz, 2.
- ²¹ Ibid., 3.
- ²² Ibid., 4.
- Department of Defense, Policy for Non-Lethal Weapons, Department of Defense Directive 3000.3 (Washington, D.C. 9 July 1996); Available from http://www.hqmc.usmc.mil/nlw/nlw.n.../0935bfa1c0cc3c6d8525652200480f77? Accessed 4 Oct 1998.
- References, USAF Institute for National Security Studies, USAF Academy, Co., July 1997, p. ix.
- Stephen R. Bowers and Pamela A. Mielnik, "Making Warfare Acceptable: Nonlethal Strategies, The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies; Spring 1998, pg. 4.
 - 26 Ibid.
 - ²⁷ Ibid., 5.
 - ²⁸ Department of Defense, <u>Policy for Non-Lethal Weapons</u>.
 - ²⁹ Bowers and Mielnik, 2.
 - 30 Ibid., 1.
 - 31 Ibid., 2.
 - 32 Kanter and Brooks, 19.
 - 33 Bowers and Mielnik, 1.
 - ³⁴ Ibid., 2.
 - 35 Ibid., 4.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Becker, Jon B., and Charles Heal, "Nonlethal Weapons and Peacekeeping Riot Control," file://U:\bh01nonlethal.htm, 11 Jan 99.
- Bowers, Stephen R. and Pamela A. Mielnik, "Making Warfare Acceptable: Nonlethal Strategies, The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies; (Spring 1998): 4.
- Bunker, Robert J., ed., <u>Nonlethal Weapons: Terms and References</u>, USAF Institute for National Security Studies, USAF Academy, Co., 1997, ix.
- Jablonsky, David. Why is Strategy Difficult? U.S. Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 1995.
- Kanter, Arnold, and Linton F. Brooks, eds. <u>U.S. Intervention</u>
 Policy for the Post-Cold War World. W.W. Norton & Co, 1994.
- Lovelace, Douglas C., Jr., and Steven Metz. Non-Lethality and American Land Power: Strategic Context and Operational Concepts. U.S. Army War College, 1998.
- National Defense Panel. <u>Transforming Defense</u>; <u>National Security in the 21st Century</u>. Arlington, VA. Report of the National Defense Panel, December 1997.
- Sheehan, General John J., U.S.M.C., Remarks during Non-Lethal Conference II, 7 Mar 96, Wash DC. Available from http://www.hqmc.usmc.mil/nlw/nlw.n.../766cd61315e 6998f85256522004f82a7? Internet; accessed 4 October 1998.
- U.S. Department of Defense. Policy for Non-Lethal Weapons.
 Department of Defense Directive 3000.3. Washington D.C. 9 Jul 96. Available from http://www.hqmc.usmc.mil/nlw/nlw.n.../0935bfa1c0cc3c6d8525652200480f77? Internet; accessed 4 October 1998.